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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if, in the view of the supervising teacher, there were differences in the performance of student teachers in an eight week program and in a full semester program. Participating supervising teachers had supervised two or more student teachers under a full-time, eight week student teaching program, and also had supervised one student teacher under a full semester program. The instrument used for data collection was a student teacher performance profile consisting of twenty-one performance objectives relating to instructional competencies and seven performance objectives relating to personal and professional competencies. Results indicated that a full semester student teaching program offers student teachers opportunities to perform at a higher level than does an eight week program. This additional time appears to be especially helpful in the development of competencies generally accepted as important in developing teaching effectiveness. (JD)

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STUDENT TEACHER PERFORMANCE IN AN EIGHT WEEKS AND A FULL SEMESTER PROGRAM: PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERVISING TEACHERS

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Biographical Summary

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STUDENT TEACHER PERFORMANCE IN AN EIGHT WEEKS AND A FULL SEMESTER PROGRAM: PERCEPTIONS OF SUPERVISING TEACHERS

The 1970's represent a decade of national concern for the preparation of teachers who can effect increased learner outcomes in classroom settings. One of the ways in which this concern has been reflected is in the amount and variety of field experiences in the pre-service program. Student teaching is part of the field experiences which is consistently considered to be of critical importance in the preparation of competent beginning professionals.

Variation and divergence has characterized the organization of student teaching programs for many years. A study of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (1963) reported that the amount of time spent in student teaching among liberal arts colleges varied from 14 to 80 clock hours. Johnson (1969) found that institutions accredited by N.C.A.T.E. required an average of eight semester hours of credit for elementary majors and seven semester hours for secondary majors. These variations are still evident across the nation and, in many instances, within a state (Morris, 1980).

The effectiveness of a student teaching program should be reflected in the performance of its products. Is time, the amount of time spent in student teaching, and organization of time, i.e., full-time for a semester, full-time for eight weeks, part-time for a semester, a significant variable in the effectiveness of a student teaching program? There is lack of consistency in reported research as to the effectiveness of the various programatic arrangements. Perhaps, as Bennie (1972) suggests, there has been only limited research efforts to determine the differences in

effectiveness of full-time and part-time programs.

Studies by Moore (1973) and Denton and Bennett (1975) indicate that student teacher performance, in certain knowledge and skill areas, is greater in full semester programs because of the time involved in student teaching. Studies by Elliott (1975) and Davis (1976) found that time or the arrangement of time were not critical elements in student teacher performance.

Two major problems in determining effectiveness of any student teaching program are the performance criteria used and the competence and relationship of the evaluator(s) to the program. Holding performance criteria constant between programs is essential for valid results. Also, the evaluator(s) should be familiar with the on-going program, products of the program, and program evaluation procedures.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if, in the view of supervising teachers, there were differences in the performance of student teachers in an eight weeks program and a full semester program.

This study was conducted during the first year of a full semester, full-time student teaching program. Prior to that time, a variation of student teaching programs, i.e., full-time for eight weeks, half-time for a full semester, were operational. Under the new program, student teachers devoted full-time to student teaching for a 15 week semester. They received 12-15 semester hours of credit and were not permitted to enroll in other courses. The kinds of activities in which student teachers engaged changed very little for the first year under the full semester program. The primary difference in the two programs was the amount of time and the freedom to vary time to meet needs of individual student teachers and supervising teachers.

Subjects

The subjects were 62 student teachers and supervising teachers. The supervising teachers had supervised two or more student teachers under the eight weeks of full-time student teaching. Each supervising teacher supervised one student teacher each semester under the full semester program. Thus, each supervising teacher had been involved in both programs for a sufficient amount of time to make comparisons. Further, supervising teachers had the day-to-day, close contact so important in making evaluative judgments about levels of student teacher performance.

Data Collection and Analysis

The instrument used for data collection was the Student Teacher Performance Profile consisting of 21 performance objectives relating to instructional competencies and 7 performance objectives relating to personal and professional competencies. These were the same performance objectives used under the eight weeks program.

At the end of the second semester, the university supervisors gave each supervising teacher the Student Teacher Performance Proflie. The purpose of the study and instructions for completing the Profile were explained to each supervising teacher. The supervising teacher completed the Profile, sealed it in an envelope, and returned it to the university supervisor. Names of supervising teachers, student teachers, or schools were not used.

Evaluation of student teacher performance was indicated on a Likert Scale. The stem and scale were as follows: "The performance of my student teachers under the full semester program was 1-Much Worse than, 2-Worse than, 3-About the same as, 4-Better than, or 5-Much Better than the performance of my student teachers under the old (8 week) program."

Results

Table 1 shows the performance criteria, rating scale, and results of the supervising teacher's comparisons of performance of student teachers in an eight weeks program with performance in a full semester program. Examination of responses to performance criteria relating to instructional competencies show that approximately one-half to two-thirds of the student teachers under the full semester program performed Better Than (4) or Much Better Than (5) student teachers in the eight weeks program on all objectives except 6, 7, and 21. These three objectives, use of duplication and audio visual equipment and providing a good model of spoken English,are competencies which were not affected by time spent in student teaching. Fourteen to 35 percent of the student teachers consistengly performed Much Better Than student teachers under the eight weeks program.

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Insert Table 1 about here
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Particular attention should be given to objectives 3, 4, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, and 18. On these objectives, 67-80 percent of the student teachers in the full semester program did Better Than or Much Better Than those in an eight week program. This is especially significant since these objectives embody the basic set of teaching competencies so important in delivering effective instruction. Development of diagnostic (objectives 3-4) competencies require a great deal of time and in-depth study. When a student teacher has only eight weeks, it is difficult to become familiar with students to the extent necessary to develop insight into their individual needs. Further, if student teachers have opportunities to study various data available in the school, additional time will be needed to utilize this information effectively. It seems

that the full semester provides additional opportunities to practice the competencies of introducing and concluding a lesson (objective 8), use of varied instructional methods (objective 9),clarifying values (objective 15), organizing and managing classroom activities (objective 16), and evaluating instruction (objectives 17-18) to a much greater extent than the eight weeks program. This additional time on task, in the view of supervising teachers, resulted in a much higher level of performance by the student teacher.

Discussion

This study indicates that a full semester student teaching program offers student teachers opportunities to perform at a higher level than does an eight weeks program. This additional time seems to be especially important in the development of certain teaching competencies.

When compared to studies previously cited, this study appears to have an advantage in that classroom performance was the criterion measurement and evaluation was perfromed by competent observers. The studies by Elliott (1975) and Davis (1976) used responses to written instruments. Moore (1975) used trained observers to collect data on student teacher performance. Moore concluded that the teaching skills most affected by extended experience were those that relate to the means by which the student teacher initiates, develops and evaluates a lesson.

Since the amount of time allocated to pre-service preparation of teachers is always a prime concern, continuing research is needed to insure that the allocation and utilization of time contributes to improved classroom performance of student teachers.

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Table 1. Comparison of Performance of Student Teachers in an 8 week program with performance in a Full Semester Program (N=62)

Key: The performance of my student teachers under the full semester program was:

1 = much worse than
2 = worse than
3 = about the same as
4 = better than
5 = much better than

the performance of my student teachers under the old (8 week) Program.

Performance Objective	Response by % and no. 1	2	3	4	5
I. INSTRUCTIONAL COMPETENCIES					
1. Develops and uses lesson plans	--	--	29.03 (18)*	37.10 (23)	33.87 (21)
2. Develops and uses performance objectives in lesson plans and in the instructional units which satisfy the formal specifications for objectives	--	--	27.42 (17)	43.44 (27)	29.03 (18)
3. Diagnoses, individually and as a group, students' entry level into lessons and instructional units	--	1.61 (1)	17.74 (11)	45.16 (28)	35.48 (22)
4. Interprets diagnostic data and prepares remediation plans	--	--	32.26 (20)	43.55 (27)	24.19 (15)
5. Demonstrates mastery of content to organize learning activities prepare instructional materials, and develop performance objectives with regard to the subject matter field	--	--	22.58 (14)	43.55 (27)	33.87 (62)
6. Effectively uses duplication and material producation equipment	--	--	58.07 (36)	27.42 (17)	14.52 (9)
7. Demonstrates skill in conducting instructional activities that use audio-visual equipment	--	--	48.39 (30)	37.10 (23)	14.52 (9)
8. Demonstrates the ability to use effective introductory and concluding instructional activities	--	3.23 (2)	17.74 (11)	57.61 (32)	27.42 (17)

Table 1 . (continued)

Performance Objective	Response by % and no. 1	2	3	4	5
9. Demonstrates the ability to use appropriate method(s) of instruction.	--	1.61 (1)	20.97 (13)	46.78 (29)	30.65 (19)
10. Uses a minimum of four different types of stimulus variation, i.e., verbal examples, diagrams on board, analogy, riddle, voice variation, gestures, facial expression, questions, instructional activities	--	1.61 (1)	37.09 (23)	38.71 (24)	22.58 (14)
11. Identifies cues associated with attending behavior of students and utilizes different stimuli to recapture student interest	--	1.61 (1)	29.03 (18)	43.55 (27)	25.80 (16)
12. Demonstrates the ability to give clear directions	--	1.61 (1)	33.87 (21)	33.87 (21)	30.65 (19)
13. Demonstrates the ability to use different levels of questioning while conducting instructional activities and by writing such questions in lesson and unit plans	--	1.61 (1)	29.03 (18)	43.55 (27)	25.81 (16)
14. Uses a variety of reinforcing techniques	--	--	32.26 (20)	41.94 (26)	25.81 (16)
15. Demonstrates tha ability to clarify values and conflicts in instructional settings	--	1.61 (1)	25.81 (16)	54.84 (34)	17.74 (11)
16. Demonstrates the ability to organize and manage classroom activities effectively and to handle or solve discipline problems occuring in the classroom by techniques, i.e., simple control, individual conference, behavior modification.	--	--	25.81 (16)	38.71 (24)	35.49 (22)

Table 1 . (continued)

Performance Objective	1	Response by % and no. 2	3	4	5
17. Constructs, administers, and interprets a variety of appropriate evaluative instruments for lesson and unit objectives	--	1.61 (1)	27.42 (17)	43.55 (27)	27.42 (17)
18. Demonstrates the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional activities.	--	--	19.36 (12)	51.61 (32)	29.03 (18)
19. Evaluates his/her own instruction (self evaluation)	--	--	33.87 (21)	33.26 (20)	33.87 (21)
20. Constructs and teaches two units of about two weeks duration which meet minimum criteria	--	--	24.19 (15)	25.81 (16)	50.00 (31)
21. Provides a good model of spoken English for students	--	1.61 (1)	70.97 (44)	19.36 (12)	8.07 (3)
II. PERSONAL AND PROFESSONAL COMPETENCIES					
22. Consistently demonstrates a high degree of responsibility and dependability by carrying out all tasks assigned or volunteered for	--	1.61 (1)	61.29 (38)	19.36 (12)	17.74 (11)
23. Consistently arrives before scheduled classes and activities begin	--	3.23 (2)	69.36 (43)	9.68 (6)	17.74 (11)
24. Accepts and conforms to established standards of dress and personal grooming.	--	1.61 (1)	75.81 (47)	11.29 (7)	11.29 (7)
25. Cooperates with supervising teacher, university supervisor, other staff members and administrative officials of the cooperating school	--	--	62.90 (39)	20.97 (13)	16.13 (10)
26. Accepts the presence of prevailing standards of conduct in various social groups and organizational settings, and demonstrates the ability to make personal adjustments to such standards both formal (written policies) and informal (unwritten policies)	--	1.61 (1)	70.97 (44)	11.29 (7)	16.13 (10)

Table 1 . (continued)

Performance Objective	Response by % and no. 1	2	3	4	5
27. Maintains a sufficient level of energy and is free of physical disabilities which hinder teaching	--	8.07 (5)	62.90 (39)	16.13 (10)	12.90 (8)
28. Demonstrates concern for students, school, and community	--	1.61 (1)	61.29 (38)	20.97 (13)	16.13 (10)

*Number of responses